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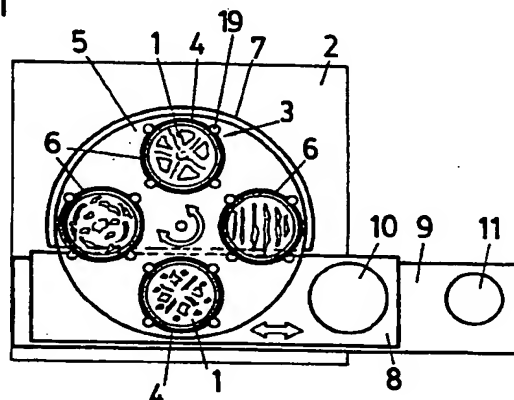
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(54) MACHINE FOR DISPENSING HOT FOOD PRODUCTS, PARTICULARLY PIZZAS

(57) The machine comprises a refrigerating store (2) which is provided with a series of columns (3) wherein are piled annular dishes (4) which contain the precooked product (1), columns (3) which are supported by a rotary platform (5) and which can rotate with respect to a fixed platform (7) situated at the bottom, the rotary platform (5) having a series of openings (6) wherein are located the extreme dishes corresponding to one column (3); parallel to the fixed platform (7) a sliding plate (8) is provided which has an opening (6) in which falls the plate (4) in a situation facing the opening (10) of the rotary platform (5), also having a lower fixed plate (9) on which the sliding plate (8) can move thereby displacing the plate, and which is provided with a cavity (11) for the passage of a vertically displaceable horizontal support (12) which pushes the product (1) till it is introduced into an oven (14).

FIG.1



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Description

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention refers to a dispensing machine for hot food products, preferably precooked, especially pizzas, which are originally piled in different columns distributed in a refrigerator store, from which, prior product selection by a consumer, they are transferred to an oven where they are rapidly heated, then being ejected towards the external tray.

[0002] An object of this invention is that the dispensing machine for hot food products has the means necessary to separate and supply the product selected from one of the storage columns, as well as means of support and transport to direct said product to a specially configured oven. Likewise, an object of the invention is the

[0003] displacement and transport device introducing and supporting the food product inside the oven during heating, likewise provided by this device.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] There are several dispensing machines on the market used for the distribution of liquid or solid food products, using different methods to facilitate the selection and dispatch of the product chosen by the consumer after introducing the corresponding coins.

[0005] A type of dispensing machine is known in which the products to be supplied are normally housed in different compartments of a tower or vertical column in which products of the same type are grouped, whether bags of crisps, chocolates or other products, to which the user has access by an external tray over which the product falls after introducing the coins and pressing the selector for said product.

[0006] In other embodiments, it is contemplated that the dispensing machine has the products grouped in the compartments of some rotating horizontal stores located at different levels, which rotate after pressing the corresponding button, until placing one of the products available opposite the exit through which the user introduces his/her hand after passing a normally foldable door providing access to the product selected.

[0007] As may be verified, the applications of the dispensing machines are different as are the solutions for storage, selection and dispatch of the product, finding internal mechanisms, normally developed according to requirements of effectiveness and operational simplicity, applicable to dispensing machines for a type of product not requiring any other treatment than its storage and distribution.

[0008] When the product concerned to be dispensed requires heat treatment, whether for its cold preservation or heating, as is the case in this last example of dispensing machine for hot drinks, it is necessary for the machine to incorporate, as well as the mechanical

means for selection and transport, heating or cooling components, conveniently located according to the intended operation sequence.

[0009] Starting from the extended acceptance of this type of dispensing machine, the development of a series of internal mechanisms situated according to operational mechanisms for the dispatch of a specific food product becomes viable, its design normally being conditioned by the different stages from the introduction of the coin until obtaining the product.

[0010] Specifically, the development of a series of mechanisms configuring a machine permitting previously precooked hot food to be dispensed, especially pizzas or similar products, makes the invention described below viable.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The automatic dispensing machine for hot food products, object of this invention, covers the expectations expressed completely satisfactorily by means of incorporating a series of internal mechanisms permitting the selection of the product desired, its transport to an oven where it is rapidly heated and its dispatch to the outside tray to which the consumer has access.

[0012] The dispensing machine incorporates a refrigerator store in which there is a series of columns in which the food products are grouped, preferably pizzas or similar products, according to the ingredients they contain.

[0013] These columns display some means for opening with easy access, preferably in their upper part, through which a series of plates with a special configuration are introduced and piled and inside of which the product is to be found.

[0014] The plates have a spacious pod of ring shape defined by walls slightly higher than the product, to prevent contact between pizzas when one plate is piled on top of another.

[0015] In their walls, said plates have a series of holes facilitating refrigeration of the product they contain, contributing to their thermal uniformity.

[0016] Each one of the mentioned columns housing the piled plates are preferably configured by a series of rods fixed to a circular rotating platform, each one of the columns being arranged, in a variable number, uniformly distributed at a constant distance from the center of the platform, and arranged opposite to each other with an ample, normally circular, passer opening in which the lower plate of the pile is housed.

[0017] The rotating platform is mobile with respect to a slightly separated lower base platform showing a preferably quasi-circular shape limited by a straight side, incorporating in the same plane and parallel to this straight side, a plate displaceable in a longitudinal sense, initiated below the rotating platform which is likewise slightly separated.

[0018] Hence, the plates containing the product will be

found freely housed inside the mentioned passer openings of the rotating platform and supported over the fixed platform, except one of the end plates of its pile which will be supported over the displaceable plate.

[0019] - Intended product selection will provoke rotation of the mobile platform and the positioning of the column corresponding to said product over the sliding plate, the end plate being supported over this plate.

[0020] The sliding plate has an ample circular opening which is displaced until opposite the plate supported over its surface, such that the latter will fall inside this opening in which it will freely situate itself, in turn resting over a lower fixed plate slightly separated from the sliding plate.

[0021] The sliding plate drags the plate during its movement towards the sector containing the oven, normally situated at a higher level.

[0022] In this sector, the base plate incorporates a recess with a diameter, practically similar to the diameter of the plate aperture, the base plate recess and the plate hole being enabled to facilitate the passage of a support interlocked to a vertically displaceable shank, determining the pushing of the support over the product contained in the plate directing it upwards inside the oven.

[0023] The support incorporates a base and a series of support pivots which slightly protrude with respect to said base on which the product is arranged, as well as also counting with some internal resistances over the base, contributing to heating the lower face of the product.

[0024] Likewise, the oven houses some heating resistances uniformly distributed over its upper and side faces which heat the circulating air transmitting heat to the product.

[0025] Product heating will take place for a short period of time, approximately one minute, it being foreseen that the oven switches on when the coin is introduced to achieve its preheating until the normal operating temperature.

[0026] Once the product has been heated, it is removed from the oven by the corresponding pushing devices situated in a preferable transverse arrangement, which transport the heated product to the exit tray.

[0027] As from this moment, the shank-support assembly, firstly, and then the sliding plate, return to their original position.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0028] To complement the description being made and with the purpose of helping an improved understanding of the invention characteristics, this specification is accompanied by a set of drawings as an integral part thereof, which illustrate without limiting the following:

Figure 1.- This shows a plan view of the plate col-

umn store in which the rotating platform and sliding plate are seen.

Figure 2.- This shows a side view of the plate column store, in which the rotating platform, fixed platform, sliding and fixed plates are represented, with one of the plates incorporated in the sliding plate opening for its transfer to the oven.

Figure 3.- This shows a side view of the support and shank, the product leaning over the support in its position inside the oven during heating.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

[0029] In the light of the figures a preferred embodiment is described for the automatic dispensing machine for hot food products, particularly pizzas, applicable for the supply of hot products prior the introduction of coins and selection of the product grouped according to its ingredients in a same piled arrangement, being different from others, because it includes a refrigerator store (2) having a series of columns (3) in which some plates (4) are piled internally, with a ring shape and containing the precooked product (1), columns (3) supported by a rotating platform (5) with respect to a fixed platform (7) located below the rotating platform (5), having a series of apertures (6) with a diameter slightly greater than the diameter of the end plate corresponding to a piled arrangement of plates of the column (3), being located in some plane and parallel to the fixed platform (7), a sliding plate (8), displaceable longitudinally with respect to a lower fixed plate (9), the sliding plate (8) counting with an opening (10) over which the plate (4) falls in its position opposite the opening (6) of the rotating platform (5), it being foreseen that the fixed plate (9) incorporates a recess (11) of less diameter than that of the plate (4) enabled for the passage of an assembly consisting of a horizontal interlocked support (12) and shank (13), which push the product (1) leaning over the support (12) until its introduction in an oven (14) having uniformly distributed resistances (18) for heating the air flow transmitting heat to the product (1).

[0030] The rotating platform (5) has a circular shape with its uniformly distributed apertures (6) in equidistant arrangement to the center of the platform (5).

[0031] The columns (3) are defined by a series of vertical rods (19) limiting the piled arrangement of the plates (4).

[0032] The plate (4) incorporates a series of holes (17) in its side wall destined to level the temperature of the product (19) it contains.

[0033] The horizontal support (12) incorporates a base body from which a series of support pivots (15) extend over which the product (19) to be heated rests, as well as having over its base body a series of heating resistances (16).

[0034] It is not considered necessary to extend this description any longer for any expert in the subject to understand the scope of the invention and the advan-

tages derived from it.

[0035] The material, shape, size and arrangement of the components will be susceptible of variation, provided they do not basically alter the invention.

[0036] The terms in which this report is described should always be interpreted in the widest and non-restricting sense.

Claims

1. A dispensing machine for hot food products, particularly pizzas, applicable for the supply of hot products, prior the introduction of coins and the selection of the product grouped according to its ingredients in a same piled arrangement, characterized in that it includes a refrigerator store (2) having a series of columns (3) in which some plates (4) are internally piled, having a ring shape containing the precooked product (1) columns (3) which are supported by a rotating platform (5) with respect to a fixed platform (7) located below, the rotating platform (5) counting with a series of openings (6) of a diameter slightly greater than the end plate corresponding to a piled arrangement of column plates (3), being located on the same plane and parallel to the fixed platform (7), a sliding plate (8), displaceable longitudinally with respect to a fixed lower plate (9), the sliding plate (8) having an opening (6) over which the plate (4) falls in its position opposite the opening (10) of the rotating platform (5), it being foreseen that the fixed plate (9) incorporates a recess (11) of less diameter than the plate (4) enabled for the passage of an assembly consisting of a horizontal support (12) and a shank (13), interlocked and vertically displaceable, pushing the product (1) leaning over the support (12) until its introduction in an oven (14) having uniformly distributed resistances (18 for heating the air flow transmitting heat to the product (1).
2. A dispensing machine for hot food products, particularly pizzas, according to claim 1, characterized in that the rotating platform (5) has a circular shape with its apertures (6) uniformly distributed in an equidistant arrangement to the platform (5) center.
3. A dispensing machine for hot food products, particularly pizzas, according to claim 1, characterized in that the columns (3) are defined by a series of vertical rods (19) limiting the piled arrangement of the plates.
4. A dispensing machine for hot food products, particularly pizzas, according to claim 1, characterized in that the plate (4) incorporates a series of holes (17) in its side wall destined to homogenize the temperature of the product (1) it contain.

5. A dispensing machine for hot food products, particularly pizzas according to claim 1, characterized in that the horizontal support (12) incorporates a base body from which a series of support pivots (15) are extended, over which the product to be heated rests, as well as counting with a series of heating resistances (16) over its base body.

FIG.1

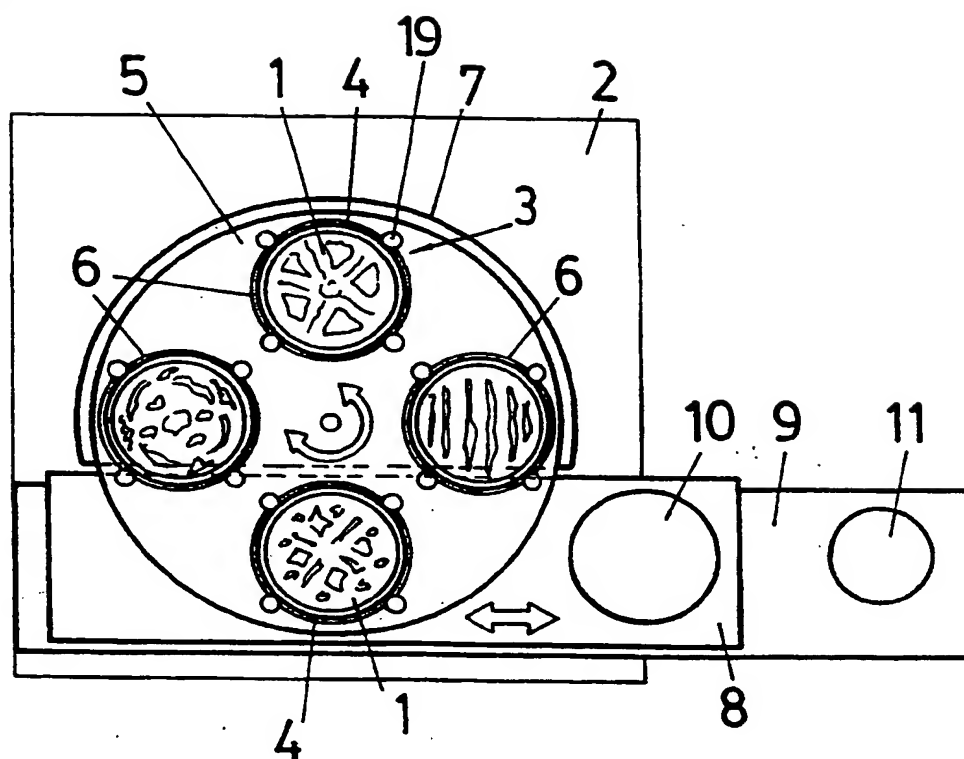
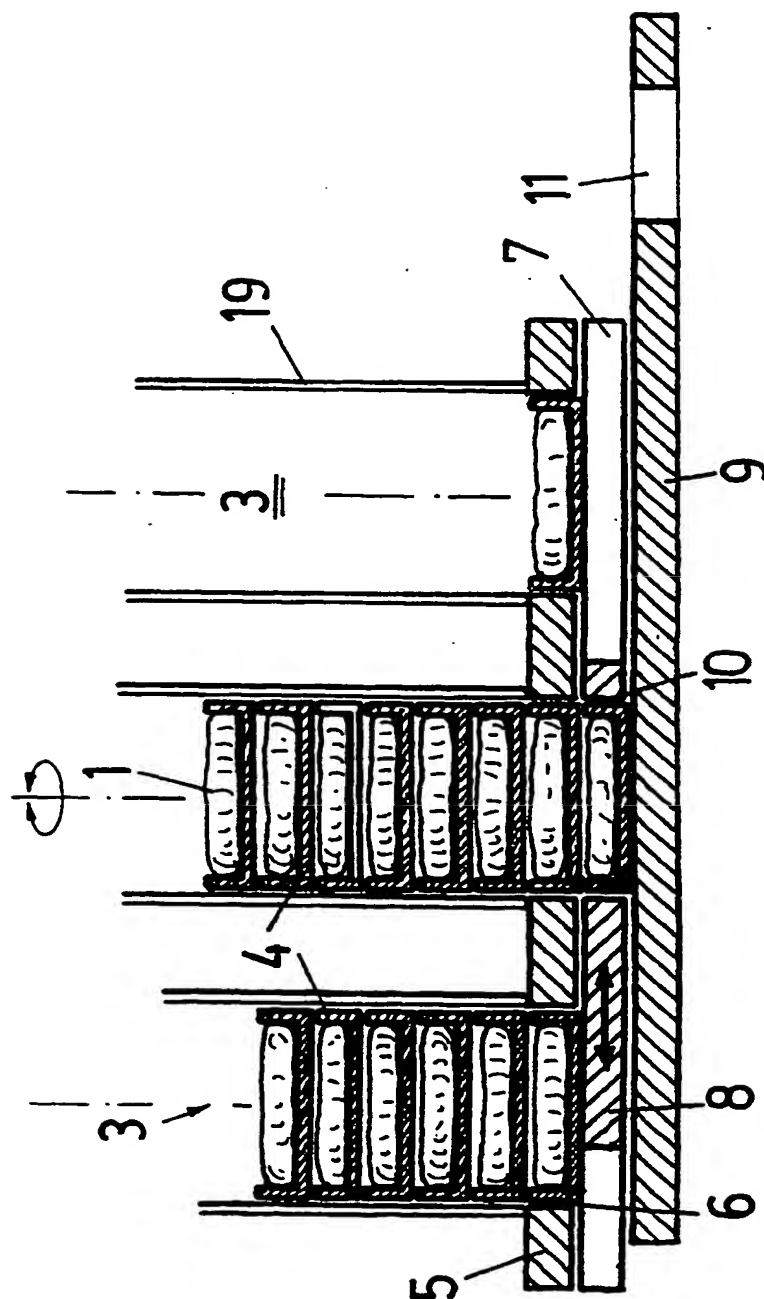
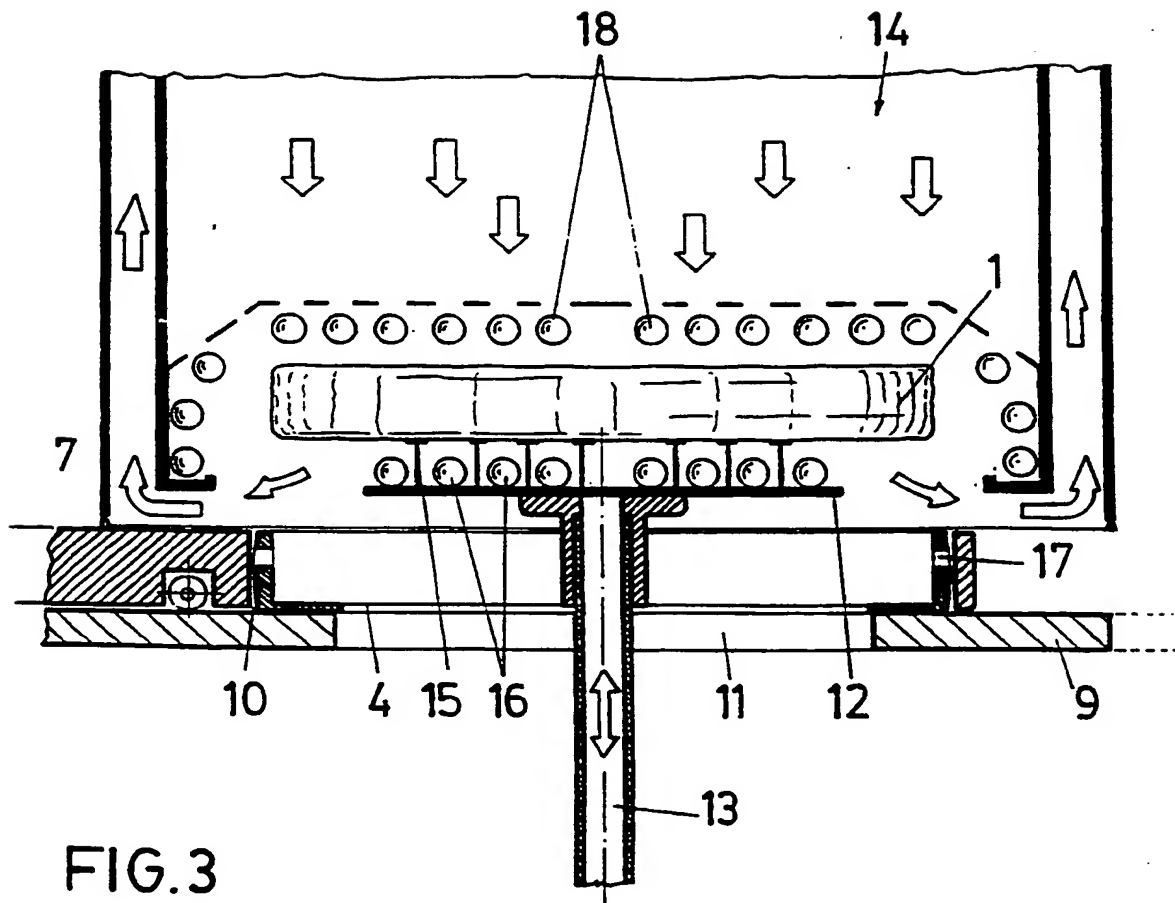


FIG. 2.





INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 6 G07F		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 522 310 A (BLACK SR GARY W ET AL) 4 June 1996 see the whole document ---	1-5
A	EP 0 708 421 A (FABBRI LORENZO) 24 April 1996 see abstract; claims 1-6; figures 1,2,4 ---	1,3
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A	WO 92 07341 A (EDGEWATER INT LTD) 30 April 1992 see abstract; claims A & WO 92 07340 A (EDGEWATER INT LTD) 30 April 1992 see figures 1-8 ---	1-3
-/-		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patent family members are listed in annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents : "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance. "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art. "Z" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 26 November 1997		Date of mailing of the international search report 21.01.98
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5816 Patentplan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016		Authorized officer GUIVOL, O

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International Application No
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